

In re: Putt et al.  
Serial No.: 10/797,775  
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**In the Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A vehicle floor mat, comprising:  
a pliable layer configured to overlie an area of a vehicle floor; and  
a rigid member attached to a portion of the pliable layer, wherein the rigid member has a width substantially less than a width and length of the pliable layer, but sufficient to span a recessed portion in the vehicle floor area such that the pliable layer is rendered substantially non-pliable above the recessed portion, and such that the floor mat is self-supporting and can independently support a load placed thereon above the recessed portion, without any external support from within the recessed portion.
2. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 1, wherein the rigid member is at least partially disposed within the pliable layer.
3. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 1, wherein the rigid member comprises material selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic and thermosetting polymers, glass reinforced thermoset rubber, glass reinforced polypropylene, wood, and metal.
4. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 1, wherein the pliable layer comprises material selected from the group consisting of natural and synthetic polymers.
5. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 1, wherein the pliable layer comprises rubber.
6. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 1, wherein the pliable layer has opposite first and second surfaces, and wherein carpeting is disposed on the pliable layer first surface.
7. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 1, wherein the rigid member comprises a plurality of spaced-apart apertures formed therethrough.

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8. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 1, further comprising a second pliable layer pivotally secured to a peripheral edge portion of the pliable layer, wherein the second pliable layer is movable between a stored position overlying the pliable layer in face-to-face relationship therewith and an operative position substantially coplanar with the pliable layer.

9. (Currently Amended) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 8, wherein a second rigid member is attached to the second pliable layer, and wherein the second rigid member has a width ~~substantially~~ less than a width and length of the second pliable layer, but configured to span a second recessed portion in the vehicle floor area such that the floor mat is self-supporting and can independently support a load placed thereon above the second recessed portion, without any external support from within the second recessed portion.

10. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 9, wherein the second rigid member is at least partially disposed within the second pliable layer.

11. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 9, wherein the second rigid member comprises material selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic and thermosetting polymers, glass reinforced thermoset rubber, glass reinforced polypropylene, wood, and metal.

12. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 9, wherein the second pliable layer comprises material selected from the group consisting of natural and synthetic polymers.

13. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 8, wherein the second pliable layer comprises rubber.

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14. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 8, wherein the second pliable layer has opposite first and second surfaces, and wherein carpeting is disposed on the second flexible member first surface.

15. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 9, wherein the second rigid member comprises a plurality of spaced-apart apertures formed therethrough.

16. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 8, wherein the second pliable layer is pivotally secured to the peripheral edge via a hinge.

17. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 16, wherein the hinge comprises carpeting disposed on the first and second pliable layers.

18. (Currently Amended) A vehicle floor mat, comprising:  
a pliable layer configured to overlie an area of a vehicle floor; and  
a rigid member disposed within the pliable layer, wherein the rigid member comprises a plurality of spaced-apart apertures formed therethrough, wherein the rigid member has a width substantially less than a width and length of the pliable layer, but sufficient to span a recessed portion in the vehicle floor area such that the pliable layer is rendered substantially non-pliable above the recessed portion, and such that the floor mat is self-supporting and can independently support a load placed thereon above the recessed portion, without any external support from within the recessed portion.

19. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 18, wherein the rigid member comprises material selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic and thermosetting polymers, glass reinforced thermoset rubber, glass reinforced polypropylene, wood, and metal.

20. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 18, wherein the pliable layer comprises material selected from the group consisting of natural and synthetic polymers.

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21. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 18, wherein the pliable layer comprises rubber.

22. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 18, wherein the pliable layer has opposite first and second surfaces, and wherein carpeting is disposed on the pliable layer first surface.

23. (Currently Amended) A vehicle floor mat, comprising:  
a first pliable layer configured to overlie an area of a vehicle floor;  
a second pliable layer pivotally secured to the first pliable layer and movable between a stored position overlying the first pliable layer in face-to-face relationship therewith and an operative position substantially coplanar with the first pliable layer;  
a first rigid member disposed within the first pliable layer; and  
a second rigid member disposed within the second pliable layer;  
wherein the first and second rigid members each have a width substantially less than a width and length of the first and second pliable layers, but sufficient to span a recessed portion in the vehicle floor area such that the respective first and second pliable layers are rendered substantially non-pliable above the recessed portion, and such that the floor mat is self-supporting and can independently support a load placed thereon above the recessed portion, without any external support from within the recessed portion.

24. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 23, wherein the first and second rigid members each comprise material selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic and thermosetting polymers, glass reinforced thermoset rubber, glass reinforced polypropylene, wood, and metal.

25. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 23, wherein the first and second pliable layers each comprise material selected from the group consisting of natural and synthetic polymers.

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26. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 23, wherein the first and second pliable layers each comprise rubber.

27. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 23, wherein the first and second pliable layers each have opposite first and second surfaces, and wherein carpeting is disposed on the each pliable layer first surface.

28. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 23, wherein the first and second rigid members each comprise a plurality of spaced-apart apertures formed therethrough.

29. (Currently Amended) A vehicle floor mat, comprising:  
a pliable layer configured to overlie an area of a vehicle floor; and  
a plurality of adjacent, spaced-apart rigid members attached to the pliable layer, wherein each rigid member has a width ~~substantially~~ less than a width and length of the pliable layer, but sufficient to span a recessed portion in the vehicle floor area such that the pliable layer is rendered substantially non-pliable above the recessed portion, and such that the floor mat is self-supporting and can independently support a load placed thereon above the recessed portion, without any external support from within the recessed portion.

30. (Previously Presented) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 29, wherein the rigid members are at least partially disposed within the pliable layer.

31. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 29, wherein each rigid member comprises material selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic and thermosetting polymers, glass reinforced thermoset rubber, glass reinforced polypropylene, wood, and metal.

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32. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 29, wherein each pliable layer comprises material selected from the group consisting of natural and synthetic polymers.

33. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 29, wherein the pliable layer comprises rubber.

34. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 29, wherein the pliable layer has opposite first and second surfaces, and wherein carpeting is disposed on the pliable layer first surface.

35. (Original) The vehicle floor mat of Claim 29, wherein each rigid member comprises a plurality of spaced-apart apertures formed therethrough.

36. (Currently Amended) A vehicle, comprising:  
a floor having a recessed portion; and  
a floor mat overlying the recessed portion in the vehicle floor, wherein the floor mat comprises:

a pliable layer; and

a rigid member attached to a portion of the pliable layer, wherein the rigid member has a width substantially less than a width and length of the pliable layer, but sufficient to span the recessed portion such that the pliable layer is rendered substantially non-pliable above the recessed portion, and such that the floor mat is self-supporting and can independently support a load placed thereon above the recessed portion, without any external support from within the recessed portion.

37. (Currently Amended) A vehicle, comprising:  
a floor having a recessed portion; and

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a floor mat overlying the recessed portion in the vehicle floor, wherein the floor mat comprises:

a pliable layer; and

a rigid member disposed within the pliable layer, wherein the rigid member comprises a plurality of spaced-apart apertures formed therethrough, wherein the rigid member has a width ~~substantially~~ less than a width and length of the pliable layer, but sufficient to span the recessed portion such that the pliable layer is rendered substantially non-pliable above the recessed portion, and such that the floor mat is self-supporting and can independently support a load placed thereon above the recessed portion, without any external support from within the recessed portion.

38. (Currently Amended) A vehicle, comprising:

a floor having a recessed portion; and

a floor mat overlying the recessed portion in the vehicle floor, wherein the floor mat comprises:

a first pliable layer;

a second pliable layer pivotally secured to the first pliable layer and movable between a stored position overlying the first pliable layer in face-to-face relationship therewith and an operative position substantially coplanar with the first pliable layer;

a first rigid member disposed within the first pliable layer; and

a second rigid member disposed within the second pliable layer;

wherein the first and second rigid members each have a width ~~substantially~~ less than a width and length of the first and second pliable layers, but sufficient to span the recessed portion such that the respective first and second pliable layers are rendered substantially non-pliable above the recessed portion, and such that the floor mat is self-supporting and can independently support a load placed thereon above the recessed portion, without any external support from within the recessed portion.

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39. (Currently Amended) A vehicle, comprising:  
a floor having a recessed portion; and  
a floor mat overlying the recessed portion in the vehicle floor, wherein the floor mat comprises:  
a pliable layer; and  
a plurality of adjacent, spaced-apart rigid members attached to the pliable layer, wherein each rigid member has a width substantially less than a width and length of the first and second pliable layer, but sufficient to span the recessed portion such that the pliable layer is rendered substantially non-pliable above the recessed portion, and such that the floor mat is self-supporting and can independently support a load placed thereon above the recessed portion, without any external support from within the recessed portion.